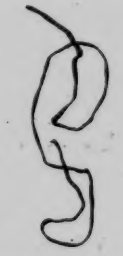
3: Stem

NR10 Klamath NR10

• 656

[For U.S. government regulations imposed on the Indians of the Klamath reservation, see categories 648 and 657.]



3:Stern E-4,5 (1949-1957) 1965 NR 10 Klamath NR 10

[Klamath Reservation]

County. Of regular municipal income in the year, 1956-57, taxation supplied only a little over four per cent. The largest sources of revenue were the water system, the city tavern (which alone supplied over one-third of the budget), and the proceeds from law enforcement (amounting to over one-fourth of the budget). Since, after the repeal of Indian prohibition in 1951, tribal members had become the major patrons of the municipal tavern, comprising in 1958 an estimated eighty per cent of its clientele, it is evident that in this indirect manner they had come to constitute a major support in the operation of the municipal government.

Nor was this all. The sizable sum derived from law enforcement was highly unusual. While the major enforcement problem in most Oregon cities of comparable size was traffic violations, Chiloquin in 1956-57 found no less than ninety-three per cent of its offenses to be felonies and misdemeanors other than traffic violations. Tribal members and other Indians, including repeaters, accounted for over seventy-two per cent of the arrests; they paid over seventy per cent of the fines and forfeited bail; and they furnished over ninety-six per cent of the trusty labor performed in the city.[1]

Aside from a few individual instances, this record does not reflect a policy of discriminatory arrests on the part of the city administration. It does, however, mark one of the significant confrontations upon the reservation. It was conditioned in part by the special statutory position of the Klamath, for as an Indian under federal supervision he was enjoined by law from having or using liquor and from marrying a white within the state. Until these disabilities were removed in 1951, tribal members were subject to arrest for acts not held criminal when committed by non-Indians. During prohibition, tribal members had learned to operate stills, had taken to drinking extracts, proprietary medicines, rubbing alcohol, and "canned heat" in lieu of scarce liquors, and had both patronized and served as bootleggers. Habits of defiant drinking, akin to those of other Americans during the "dry" years, lingered even into the years after repeal.

Klamath experience with strong drink and violence had neither begun with the reservation towns nor was it confined to them;